

## Utah WINGS Update

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Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS) is a multi-disciplinary problem solving body that relies on court-community partnerships to:

- Oversee guardianship practice;
- Address key policy issues;
- Improve the current system of guardianship and less restrictive alternatives;
- Engage in outreach, education;
- Enhance the quality of care and quality of life of vulnerable adults.

In April 2013 the Utah Administrative Office of the Courts convened a large working steering committee that meets bimonthly. Agendas are posted at <http://www.utcourts.gov/utc/wings>.

WINGS Executive Committee:

1. David Connors, Judge, Second District Court, WINGS Chair
2. Karolina Abuzyarova, WINGS and Court Visitor Program Coordinator
3. Kent Alderman, Elder law attorney, Elder Law Section of the Utah State Bar
4. Mary Jane Ciccarello, Director, Self-help Center, Utah State Courts
5. Nancy Sylvester, Staff Attorney, Administrative Office of the Courts
6. Shannon Alvey, Director, Office of Public Guardian

Steering Committee:

1. Carol Fletcher, Licensed caregiver, private guardian, volunteer visitor
2. Daniel Musto, Director, Long-term Care Ombudsman
3. David Connors, Judge, Second District Court, WINGS Chair
4. Ellen Silver, Director, Jewish Family Services
5. Holly Kees, Court Visitor Volunteer Coordinator
6. James Brady, Judge, Fourth District Court
7. James Toledo, Program Manager, Utah Division of Indian Affairs
8. Joseph Taylor, Crisis Intervention Team, Utah State Coordinator, SLCPD
9. Julie Rigby, Team Manager, Third District Court
10. Lisa Thornton, Private attorney, activist
11. Kent Alderman, Elder law attorney, Elder Law Section of the Utah State Bar
12. Nan Mendenhall, Director, Adult Protective Services
13. Nels Holmgren, Director, Utah Division of Aging and Adult Services
14. Patricia Vigo, Latino Liaison, Utah Parent Center
15. Robert Denton, Managing Attorney, Disability Law Center
16. Shannon Alvey, Director, Office of Public Guardian
17. Wendy Fayles, Criminal Justice Mentor, National Alliance on Mental Illness

**Utah WINGS accomplishments are:**

1. WINGS formed in April 2013 – groundbreaking initiative with funding from the National Guardianship Network with only three other states (OR, NY, TX, UT).
2. Held statewide guardianship summit in November 2013.
3. Published three papers written by WINGS members resulting from the summit in the 2014 Utah Bar Journal:
  - “Improving Service Delivery to Protected Persons and Their Guardians”

- “The Challenge of Submitting Competent Medical Evidence of Incapacity in Guardianship Proceedings”
  - “Person-Centered Planning and Supported Decision-Making.”
4. Utah State Court staff published guardianship web pages:  
[www.utcourts.gov/howto/family/GC](http://www.utcourts.gov/howto/family/GC).
  5. Created active WINGS listserv, February 2014.
  6. Formed Executive Committee, February 2014.
  7. International profiling of the Utah guardianship monitoring program at the Third World Congress on Adult Guardianship in Virginia, May 2014.
  8. Adopted organizational bylaws, August 2015.
  9. Started collaboration with Social Security Administration and Veteran’s Administration via national conference calls and information exchange.
  10. Utah State Courts and Utah State Bar established Guardianship Signature Program that provides free and low-cost legal representation to vulnerable adults in guardianship proceedings.
  11. Featured panel consisting of Utah WINGS leaders at the 13th Rocky Mountain Geriatrics Conference, September 2015.
  12. Organized three public classes for guardians and caregivers on alternatives to guardianship, guardianship procedures, and community resources in fall 2015.
  13. Interviewed on KUED, Channel 7 on the guardianship monitoring program in December 2015: [www.kued.org/contact/utah-courts-visitor-volunteer-program](http://www.kued.org/contact/utah-courts-visitor-volunteer-program).

**Activities in progress:**

1. Create an online training program for the public on guardianship resources.
2. Reach out to the minorities, disseminate information and build partnerships.
3. Translate guardianship web pages into Spanish.
4. Organize live public classes on guardianship in Spanish.

WINGS brings together professionals in the fields of law, social work, medicine, aging services, Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration, non-profit agencies, private guardians, healthcare associations, AARP, Alzheimer’s Association and others. Connections are established between agencies that sometimes served the same population but did not communicate with each other or provide referrals. WINGS widens the understanding of gaps in the area of guardianship and beyond, and offers a platform for a dialogue, coordination and face to face learning opportunities. Large bureaucratic structures started sharing information, and that, hopefully, will make the life of vulnerable adults and their caregivers and guardians easier.

**Contacts:**

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